SI. No.	Name of Servece Area (Metro/Telecom Circles)	No. of subscribers as on 30.9.2001
16.	Orissa	36,754
17.	Punjab	2,08,222
18.	Rajasthan	85,516
19.	Tamil Nadu	2,61,778
20.	UP(E)	1,06,807
21.	UP(W)	1,41,585
22.	West Bengal	28,974
	GRAND TOTAL:	48,07,700

Replacement of existing telephone technology in Villages

†462. SHRI KAPIL SIBAL:
SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN':

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have taken a decision during the last few years to replace the existing telephone technology in the villages in order to streamline functioning of telephones;

(b) if so, the number of villages required to be provided with the new technology;

(c) the number of villages already provided with this technology upto September 2001; and

(d) by when, the remaining villages are targeted to be covered?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) It has been decided to replace the faulty Village Public Telephones (VPTs) in the country, working on MARR System, by new technology VPTs in a phased manner.

(b) In all about 2.11 lakh such VPTs are proposed to be replaced.

(c) Upto September 2001, no replacement has been done.

(d) These are proposed to be replaced in a phased manner over a period of two years *i.e.* by the year 2003 subject to availability of funds.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.